

Traditional Ceremony Script

PROCESSIONAL

Beginning of the wedding ceremony. Guests are seated followed by the entrance of the bridal party.

INVOCATION

Welcome, loved ones. We are gathered here today to join [Name] and [Name] in holy matrimony.

VOW EXCHANGE

[Name], I promise to cherish you always, to honor and sustain you, in sickness and in health, in poverty and in wealth, and to be true to you in all things until death alone shall part us.

[Name] I promise to cherish you always, to honor and sustain you, in sickness and in health, in poverty and in wealth, and to be true to you in all things until death alone shall part us.

RING EXCHANGE AND DECLARATION OF INTENT

With this ring I, [Name], take you, [Name], to be no other than yourself. Loving what I know of you, and trusting what I do not yet know, I will respect your integrity and have faith in your abiding love for me, through all our years, and in all that life may bring us.

With this ring I, [Name], take you, [Name], to be no other than yourself. Loving what I know of you, and trusting what I do not yet know, I will respect your integrity and have faith in your abiding love for me, through all our years, and in all that life may bring us.

PRONOUNCEMENT

By the power vested in me by the state of STATE, I now pronounce you [husband and wife, husband and husband, wife and wife]!

Nonreligious Ceremony Script

PROCESSIONAL

Beginning of the wedding ceremony. Guests are seated.

INVOCATION

Family and friends, thank you all for coming today to share in this wonderful occasion. Today we are here together to unite [Name] and [Name] in marriage.

DECLARATION OF INTENT

Do you [Name], take this woman to be your lawfully wedded [husband/wife], to live together in matrimony, to love her, comfort her, honor and keep her, in sickness and in

health, in sorrow and in joy, to have and to hold, from this day forward, as long as you both shall live?

I do.

Do you [Name], take this woman to be your lawfully wedded [husband/wife], to live together in matrimony, to love her, comfort her, honor and keep her, in sickness and in health, in sorrow and in joy, to have and to hold, from this day forward, as long as you both shall live?

I do.

RING EXCHANGE

[Name] and [Name] have chosen rings to exchange with each other as a symbol of their unending love. As you place this ring on [Name]'s finger, please repeat after me. With this ring, I thee wed and pledge you my love now and forever.

[Name], as you place this ring on [Name]'s finger, please repeat after me. With this ring, I thee wed and pledge you my love now and forever.

PRONOUNCEMENT

By the authority vested in me by the State of [State], I now pronounce you [husband and wife, husband and husband, wife and wife]!

RECESSIONAL

End of the wedding ceremony.

Modern Ceremony Script

INVOCATION

Welcome family and friends. We are gathered here today to witness and celebrate the marriage of [Name] and [Name]. This is not the beginning of a new relationship but an acknowledgment of the next chapter in their lives together. [Name] and [Name] have spent years getting to know each other, and we now bear witness to what their relationship has become. Today, they will affirm this bond formally and publicly.

[Name] and [Name] will mark their transition as a couple not only by celebrating the love between themselves, but by also celebrating the love between all of us—including the love of their parents, siblings, extended family, and best friends. Without that love, today would be far less joyous.

DECLARATION OF INTENT

Do you [Name] take [Name] to be your lawfully wedded [husband/wife]? To have and to hold, in sickness and in health, in good times and not so good times, for richer or poorer, keeping yourself unto him for as long as you both shall live? I do,

Do you [Name] take [Name] to be your lawfully wedded [husband/wife]? To have and to hold, in sickness and in health, in good times and not so good times, for richer or poorer, keeping yourself unto him for as long as you both shall live?

I do.

RING EXCHANGE

A ring is an unbroken circle, with ends that have been joined together, and it represents your union. It is a symbol of infinity, and of your infinite love. When you look at these rings on your hands, be reminded of this moment, your commitment, and the love you now feel for each other.

[Name], place the ring on [Name]'s finger and repeat after me:

[Name], I give you this ring as a symbol of my love with the pledge: to love you today, tomorrow, always, and forever.

And now...[Name], place the ring on [Name]'s finger and repeat after me:

[Name], I give you this ring as a symbol of my love with the pledge: to love you today, tomorrow, always, and forever.

PRONOUNCEMENT

Before these witnesses, you have pledged to be joined in marriage. You have now sealed this pledge with your wedding rings. By the authority vested in me by the great State of [State], I now pronounce you married!

Christian Ceremony Script

INVOCATION

We are gathered here today in the sight of God and these witnesses to join together [Name] and [Name] in holy matrimony; which is an honorable estate, instituted of God, since the first man and the first woman walked on the earth. Therefore; it is not to be entered into unadvisedly or lightly, but reverently and soberly. Into this holy estate, these two persons present come now to be joined. Therefore, if anyone can show just cause why they may not be lawfully joined together, let them speak now or forever hold their peace.

READING

A reading from the Apostle Paul, The first letter to the Corinthians, Chapter 13, verses 4 through 7: Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. It is not rude, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres. Father, as and pledge themselves to each other, help them and bless them that their love may be pure, and their vows may be true. Through Jesus Christ our Lord, Amen.

DECLARATION OF INTENT

[Name] and [Name], you have come together this day so that the Lord may seal and strengthen your love in the presence of this minister of His word and this community of family and friends and so, in the presence of this gathering, I ask you to state your intentions: Have you both come here freely and without reservation to give yourselves to each other in marriage? If so, answer by saying 'I have.'

'I have.'

RING EXCHANGE

[Name], please take the ring you have selected for [Name]. As you place it on [his/her] finger, repeat after me: With this ring, I thee wed.

[Name], please take the ring you have selected for [Name]. As you place it on [his/her] finger, repeat after me: With this ring, I thee wed.

PRAYER

May Jesus Christ, Our Lord and Savior, always be at the center of the new lives you are now starting to build together, that you may know the ways of true love and kindness. May the Lord bless you both all the days of your lives and fill you with His joy. Amen.

PRONOUNCEMENT

Those whom God has joined together, let no man put asunder. In so much as [Name] and [Name] have consented together in holy wedlock, and have witnessed the same before God and this company, having given and pledged their faith, each to the other, and having declared same by the giving and receiving of rings, I pronounce that you are husband and wife. I ask you now to seal the promises you have made with each other this day with a kiss.

RECESSIONAL

End of the wedding ceremony.

Jewish Ceremony Script

SIGNING OF THE KETUBAH

The Ketubah is an ancient document and is a marriage contract that lays out the commitment that the couple has to each other. It is signed by two Jewish witnesses, neither of whom can be blood-related family members to the couple.

BEDEKEN

After the Ketubah signing, there is a short but meaningful ritual where the groom covers the bride's face with her veil. The veiling itself is a symbol of modesty, based upon the biblical account of Rebecca meeting Isaac. Some

couples put a modern spin on by having the bride place a (yarmulke) on the groom.

INVOCATION

We are gathered here today to celebrate the union of [Name] and [Name]. A special thanks to all of you that traveled from far and wide to witness the promise these two are about to make to one another. We are here to offer our love and support, and to stand with [Name] and [Name] as they begin this new chapter of their lives.

RING EXCHANGE

The couple will now exchange rings. These rings symbolize the never-ending love you feel for each other. The ring has neither a beginning nor an end, just as there is no beginning or end to what the partners give and receive. These rings will be a reminder of the vows you have taken today. By this ring, you are consecrated to me according to the law of Moses and Israel.

BLESSING OF THE HANDS

[Name] and [Name], please join hands. Looks at these hands for they are of your closest friend. They are strong and full of love. As you join hands today, you make the promise to love each other today, tomorrow, and forever.

THE SEVEN BLESSINGS

The Seven Blessings are now recited.

BREAKING THE GLASS

The ceremony is concluded by the groom stamping on a glass and smashing it. This is the signal for the gathered people to cheer, dance, shout “Mazal Tov!” Some couples choose to update this tradition by breaking the glass together with one swift smash in unison.

FAQ

LENGTH OF TIME

Wedding ceremonies usually last between 20 and 30 minutes, which is ample time to cover the basics (words of welcome, a few readings, your vows, the ring exchange, and the final pronouncement). The exact length of your wedding ceremony will depend first and foremost on how many different elements you choose to include, as well as if you are having a religious or secular ceremony.

SEATING

The most attention and effort should be paid to where the VIPs of the wedding will sit: parents, grandparents, close family members, and if they won't be standing at the altar, the bridal party.

In the most traditional Christian, heterosexual weddings, the bride's parents sit in the first row on the left side of the aisle, while the groom's parents will fill in the first row on the right side. In a Jewish wedding, this formation is flipped: The bride's family is placed on the right, while the groom's family is on the left. In some Jewish Orthodox and Muslim wedding ceremonies, attendees are divided by gender.

Close family members such as aunts, uncles, cousins, and siblings not in the wedding party will sit in the next row or two unless the wedding party won't be standing for the ceremony. In that case, the wedding party will typically fill in the second row on either side of the aisle, though some houses of worship will have them sit front row.

In families with step-parents, the most traditional arrangement is to have the mother, her spouse/partner, and any other close relatives of hers take the first row, while the father and his group take the second row. If the parents are on good terms, it's perfectly fine to sit them both in the first row, albeit usually not right next to one another. "A buffer of their spouses, or an aunt or a grandparent, works well," Dominick says.

When it comes to attendees beyond the VIPs, guests of the bride have traditionally filled in on the bride's side, while guests of the groom have filled in on the groom's side. But mingling is encouraged more and more these days, so don't worry too much if guests mix between sides—especially because it makes for better pictures if there's an even distribution across the aisle.

VOWS

Non-Denominational Wedding Vows

In this beautiful set of wedding vows from a non-denominational ceremony, the couple conducts a knot-tying unity ceremony (wherein they make a fishermen's knot—the kind that grows stronger with pressure). Then, they vow to one another:

I, _____, commit myself to you, _____, as (wife/husband) to learn and grow with, to explore and adventure with, to respect you in everything as an equal partner, in the foreknowledge of joy and pain, strength and weariness, direction and doubt, for all the risings and settings of the sun. We tie these knots to symbolize our connection to one another. They represent our trust in each other and our combined strength together.

Interfaith Wedding Vows

An interfaith ceremony combines the different faiths and beliefs of each partner, creating beautifully blended vows that reflect the core values of both.

I, _____, take you, _____, to be my wife/husband. I promise to be true to you in good times and in bad, in sickness and in health. I will love and honor you all the days of my life.

Lutheran Wedding Vows

Similar to other Christian religions, Lutheran vows can be read by the officiant and repeated by the to-be-weds.

I, _____, take you, to be my (wife/husband), and these things I promise you: I will be faithful to you and honest with you; I will respect, trust, help, and care for you; I will share my life with you; I will forgive you as we have been forgiven; and I will try with you better to understand ourselves, the world, and God; through the best and worst of what is to come, and as long as we live.

7. Baptist Wedding Vows

There are two options for traditional Baptist vows. The first is a call-and-response from your officiant:

Officiant: "Will you, have _____ to be your (wife/husband)? Will you love (her/him), comfort and keep (her/him), and forsaking all others remain true to (her/him), as long as you both shall live?"

Bride/Groom: "I will."

Your other option is a shorter version of vows—one line said by both partners:

I, _____, take thee, to be my (wife/husband), and before God and these witnesses, I promise to be a faithful and true (husband/wife).

8. Presbyterian Wedding Vows

Traditional Presbyterian vows offer another moving interpretation of those of other Christian religions. One variation is a simple call-and-response with the officiant.

Officiant: "_____, wilt thou have this woman/man to be thy wife/husband, and wilt thou pledge thy faith to him/her, in all love and honor, in all duty and service, in all faith and tenderness, to live with her/him, and cherish her/him, according to the ordinance of God, in the holy bond of marriage?"

Bride/Groom: "I will."

Alternately, couples can speak their own vows.

I, _____, take you, _____, to be my wife/husband, and I do promise and covenant, before God and these witnesses, to be your loving and faithful husband/wife in plenty and in want, in joy and in sorrow, in sickness and in health, as long as we both shall live.

9. Catholic Wedding Vows

Before you get to your vows, Catholic brides and grooms usually have to answer three questions from the priest:

"_____ and _____, have you come here freely and without reservation to give yourselves to each other in marriage?"

"Will you honor each other as man and wife for the rest of your lives?"

"Will you accept children lovingly from God and bring them up according to the law of Christ and his Church?"

You will respond with either "I will" or "yes," then continue onto the vows themselves:

I, _____, take you, _____, to be my (husband/wife). I promise to be true to you in good times and in bad, in sickness and in health. I will love you and honor you all the days of my life.

10. Episcopalian Wedding Vows

In Episcopalian tradition, the to-be-weds engage in a simple call-and-response with the officiant.

Officiant: "_____, wilt thou have this woman/man to be thy wedded wife/husband to live together after God's ordinance in the Holy Estate of Matrimony? Wilt thou love her/him? Comfort her/him, honor and keep her/him, in sickness and in health, and forsaking all others keep thee only unto her/him as long as you both shall live?"

Bride/Groom: "I will."

Couples can also choose to speak their own vows, similar to those of other Christian religions.

In the name of God, I, _____, take you, _____, to be my wife/husband, to have and to hold from this day forward, for better, for worse, for richer, for poorer, in sickness and in health, to love and to cherish, until parted by death. This is my solemn vow

Quotes About Love to Inspire Your Wedding Vows

01 of 17

Living in a Dream

"You know you're in love when you can't fall asleep because reality is finally better than your dreams." —*Dr. Seuss*

02 of 17

A Love That Lasts a Lifetime

"I look at you and see the rest of my life in front of my eyes." —*Unknown*

03 of 17

Forever Changed

"It's amazing how one day someone walks into your life, and suddenly, you can't remember how you lived without them." —*Anurag Prakash Ray*

04 of 17

Whimsical

"How lucky I am to have something that makes saying goodbye so hard." —*Winnie the Pooh*

05 of 17

A Nod to Disney

"I know they say there are a lot of fish in the sea, but you're my Nemo." —*Unknown*

06 of 17

Destined to Be Together

"Whatever souls are made of, his and mine are the same." —*Emily Brontë*

07 of 17

Forever

"When you realize you want to spend the rest of your life with somebody, you want the rest of your life to start as soon as possible." —*Harry, When Harry Met Sally*

08 of 17

A Lifetime of Love

"I swear I couldn't love you more than I do right now, and yet I know I will tomorrow." —*Leo Christopher*

09 of 17

Complete Harmony

"Some souls just understand each other upon meeting." —*N.R. Hart*

10 of 17

Never Let Go

"The best thing to hold onto in life is each other." —*Audrey Hepburn*

11 of 17

No Substitute

"I would not wish any companion in the world but you." —*William Shakespeare*

The Ultimate Wedding Ceremony Guide

12 of 17

Growing Old Together

"Grow old along with me, the best is yet to be." —*Robert Browning*

13 of 17

Sweet Determination

"The question isn't who's going to let me; it's who's going to stop me." —*Ayn Rand*

14 of 17

Absolute Adoration

"When I look at you, I see everything I've ever wanted." —*Anonymous*

15 of 17

Humorously Humble

"A marriage is always made up of two people who are prepared to swear that only the other one snores." —*Terry Pratchett*

16 of 17

Eternal Love

"I would find you in any lifetime." —*Kanye West*

17 of 17

Laughter Is Key

"Make sure you marry someone who laughs at the same things you do." —*J.D. Salinger*

FUNERALS

Types –

Funeral service The **traditional funeral service** is still the most common type of funeral ceremony held in many parts of the country. At a traditional funeral service, the casket or urn is usually present.

Friends and family may sing or play songs in memory of the deceased, and someone may also deliver a eulogy. Traditional funerals are often religious in nature, so a pastor will most likely give a sermon.

A hearse will transport the remains to the cemetery for burial immediately following the traditional funeral, if there is a casket. There may or may not be a short graveside (or “committal”) service, at which the casket is buried or the urn is inurned. Following this, the family may host a reception or lunch in memory of their loved one. The funeral service is typically preceded by a viewing or visitation (usually the night before), and followed by a graveside service. See below for more details on each of those types of funeral services.

Graveside or committal service - What is a Graveside Service? (a.k.a. Committal Service)

A **graveside service** is a funeral ceremony that occurs at the cemetery, where family and friends pay their final respects before the casket is lowered into the ground for burial. Because loved ones are committing the deceased back to the earth, this intimate service is also called a committal. A

graveside service often follows a traditional funeral, but sometimes may be the only service a family chooses. Often a pastor will speak a few words of comfort (think “ashes to ashes and dust to dust”) or the funeral director may share a few remarks at the wishes of the family, but otherwise this service is usually fairly short and simple.

For example, [U.S. President Calvin Coolidge’s committal service](#) contained the following:

- Rev. Penner commits Coolidge’s body to burial
- Poem: *Warm Summer Sun*, by Robert Richardson
- Benediction
- Silence
- TAPS

[Direct burial](#) - Sometimes a family desires to bury their loved one, but does not plan a funeral or other formal ceremony. In this case, they may choose a **direct burial** option.

With direct burial, there is no visitation, funeral, or even graveside service. The funeral home simply buries the casket. The immediate family is typically present, and someone may say a few words, but the general idea is that direct burial is simpler.

Sometimes, a family will choose this type of funeral with plans for a memorial service at a later date. [Learn more about direct burial here.](#)

Direct burials are a more affordable option for the family that will not be having a formal funeral, but still wishes to have

their loved one interred in a cemetery. Often, this happens when the family does not live near the decedent.

[Direct cremation](#) - Similar to direct burial, **direct cremation** is a stand-alone event. It is simply a cremation; there is no formal visitation or funeral.

Following [cremation](#), the funeral home or crematory returns the remains to the family, who may or may not choose to have a memorial service later on down the road.

Direct cremation is usually the least expensive option for final disposition. [Read more about direct cremation here](#).

If you choose a direct cremation for your loved one, the funeral home or crematory will most likely return the remains to you in a [very basic container](#). But you may choose to have the remains transferred into a permanent, more attractive urn (the facility serving you will be happy to do this for you).

[Memorial service](#) - The **memorial service** is one of the most common types of funeral services. It is very similar to a traditional funeral, with the exception being that the casketed body is not present. (Cremated remains in an urn may or may not be present.)

The beauty of memorial services is that they do not have to occur [within a certain time frame](#) following a death. The ceremony can happen a day after interment or inurnment, a year later, or whenever. The remains are not at the center of this service, only the precious memory of the deceased.

[Celebration of life](#) - A **celebration of life** is a [unique ceremony unto its own](#). While it can take the place of a traditional funeral service, it's common for the celebration of life to occur days, weeks, or even years following the funeral. This means that the remains are often not present. However, this can vary depending on the family's preference.

Celebrations of life are exactly that: celebrations!

Personalization is important in a celebration of life, and it is usually more joyful than somber.

Depending on the region and culture of the family, a celebration of life may include food, dancing, and happy memories shared of the deceased.

[Wake](#) - A **wake** is the solemn service usually occurring just before the funeral. The origins of traditional wakes are in Catholicism, so the faithful may say the Rosary during the wake.

Traditionally, wakes take place in the home, but many funeral homes now serve as venue. People sometimes call wakes *visitations* or *viewings*. During the wake, loved ones come together to comfort one another and to pay their final respects to the deceased. The body or remains may or may not be present.

[Viewing](#) - The term viewing is often used interchangeably with *wake* and *visitation*, but it does have an official meaning

all its own. It is fairly straightforward: at a viewing, the body is usually present to be viewed by mourners.

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[Visitation](#) - As mentioned above, people generally use the terms *visitation*, *wake*, and *viewing* interchangeably. But the body is usually not present at the visitation, which most likely takes place at the funeral home or at the family's home. The emphasis of a visitation is placed on visiting with grieving family and friends, so it's going to be less formal than the funeral. Drinks, dessert, appetizers, even a full potluck meal are all appropriate at a visitation

[Scattering ceremony](#) - A scattering ceremony occurs when a family chooses to [scatter the cremated remains](#) of their loved one, rather than keep or bury them. Usually, the family scatters the ashes into the wind, at a location that was especially important to the deceased.

Scattering ceremonies can be simple or elaborate. The family may release the ashes silently and serenely [into the ocean](#)... or incorporate them into a spectacular firework display.

The ceremony itself is usually similar to a graveside or committal service. It is an appropriate time to [say a few words](#) to honor the departed loved one. Consider reading a favorite quote or Scripture, saying a prayer, or singing a hymn.

Keep in mind that, depending on the state you're in, there are laws surrounding where ashes may be scattered.

Sample Funeral Program 1 – Traditional Religious Service:

Here is an example of a common traditional outline used for a religious or spiritual funeral order of service. Although this example features a Christian program, a similar format can be followed in creating a funeral program for any religious tradition:

- Music Prelude
- Welcoming – Program Officiant
- Processional – The Family
- Scripture Reading – A Minister
- Prayer – Rev. or Ministers
- Congregational Hymn
- Reading of Obituary
- Eulogy (*Minister or Relative*)
- Piano Solo
- Remarks
- Poem Reading
- Final Words –
- Closing – Minister
- Final Viewing and Procession to Cemetery

Sample Funeral Program 2 – Non-Traditional Service:

Looking for an alternative to a formal funeral service? Here's an example of a non-traditional funeral program, and you can see the printed program example below:

- Title: In Loving Remembrance of _____
- Location: _____
- Welcome/Introduction –
- Reading, Peace My Heart, (any poem or reading)
- *The Garden Song*
- Life Tribute
- Meditation or moment of silence

- Open Mic (please limit to 2 minutes per person)
- Acknowledgments and Closing Remarks
- Refreshments and Gathering to Follow the Service
- Optional: add a quote, poem or verse

Sample 3 – Non-Traditional Service:

If you are holding an informal memorial or life celebration, then consider a few adjustments to the program:

- Welcome/Introduction
- Music selections
- Readings
- Meditation or moment of silence
- Life tribute
- Open mic or informal tributes
- Closing

- **Scriptures:** For a religious service, you may choose to include relevant hymns and scriptures.
- **Poems:** For a non-traditional funeral program, you may choose to list a quote or [funeral service poems](#).
- **Service Information:** Time, date, location, officiant, etc.
- **Order of Service:** The list of events that will take place.
- **Participants:** Names of the people participating in the service including speakers, musicians, and pallbearers.
- **Musical Selections:** Hymnal page numbers or lyrics for your [funeral songs](#).
- **Obituary:** Consider adding a [short obituary](#) or biography of the person.

- **Event Details:** Share locations and times for the interment (burial) and any post-funeral reception.